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Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 101: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 102: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 158: QUESTION OF THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST ORGANIZED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME (continued)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/51/3 (Parts I and II), A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/327, A/51/357 and A/51/450; A/C.3/51/L.2 and L.3)

AGENDA ITEM 102: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued) (A/51/3 (Parts I and II), A/51/68, 87, 93, A/51/129-E/1996/53, A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/295, 375, 436, 437 and 469)

AGENDA ITEM 158: QUESTION OF THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST ORGANIZED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME (continued) (A/C.3/51/7)

1. Ms. TOMOVÁ (Slovakia) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made at the 8th meeting by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated States.

2. She noted that, according to recent statistics, Slovakia had become a consumer, rather than a transit country. The number of registered heroin addicts had increased dramatically since 1992. The Government was taking appropriate legislative, administrative and institutional measures as part of the fight against drugs. In 1995, a national programme had been adopted, and an inter-ministerial committee would coordinate its implementation. The programme focused on prevention of drug addiction, provision of comprehensive care for drug addicts and prevention of drug manufacture and trafficking. A commission had also been established in order to participate in drafting legislation on drug addiction, and a law on management of an anti-drug fund had been passed. The fund's resources would be directed towards prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

3. Her country fully supported the global programme of action against illicit narcotic drugs, and participated in the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the UNDCP subregional programme for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Ministerial Conference of the States of the Central European Initiative had been hosted by Slovakia in the capital, Bratislava, in order to share information and discuss ways of strengthening the fight against internationally organized crime. The conference had adopted the Declaration of Bratislava, which acknowledged the beginning of the process to harmonize the legislative and institutional measures to fight against drugs.

4. Slovakia supported all the relevant General Assembly resolutions and endeavoured to implement them at the national level. The drug phenomenon had shown an extraordinary ability to adapt to changing economic and political circumstances. For that reason, Slovakia supported the holding of a special session of the General Assembly in 1998 on international drug control.

5. Mrs. SANDRU (Romania) said her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated States.

6. The unprecedented globalization and diversification of organized transnational crime constituted a major threat to security, social and economic stability and the democratic development of States. The efforts of Governments to strengthen national anti-crime legislation, develop preventive mechanisms and provide a humane criminal justice system should therefore be supported by increased international cooperation. The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme should be strengthened, and there should be better coordination among the various structures in the United Nations system dealing with crime prevention, human rights and international drug control.

7. Since her country attached the greatest importance to the recommendations of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo in 1995, it had developed bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperative links with a view to promoting joint policies, programmes and mechanisms for crime prevention and law enforcement. A number of agreements had been concluded with Central and East European countries and members of the European Union. The focus was on fighting international terrorism, money laundering, illicit trafficking in drugs, radioactive materials, weapons and ammunition, women and children, as well as related criminal activities. A council established in 1995 had elaborated an integrated government anti-crime programme, important aspects of which were the use of non-custodial measures, the updating of legislation, improvement of law-enforcement skills, development of a partnership between police and communities, and public education. A number of educational programmes, some sponsored by the Council of Europe, targeted various groups at risk, such as children, youth, women and Gypsy communities. Her delegation considered the implementation of the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime, adopted at the 1994 Naples Conference, as urgent, and appreciated the draft United Nations framework convention against organized crime submitted by Poland (A/C.3/51/7).

8. With regard to international drug control, which was closely related to issues of organized crime, she said that Romania had recently become a transit country. In common with other States with economies in transition, the institutional structures required to combat illicit drug trafficking were still being developed. Legal measures were being prepared. Romania had ratified all relevant international conventions, and took an active part in international programmes to combat illicit drugs. Her country had benefited from UNDCP support in updating its legislation and establishing a modern drug-analysis laboratory. It had cooperated with INTERPOL and other police forces. Her delegation was committed to participating in preparations for the proposed special session of the General Assembly in 1998, viewing it as a historic opportunity to shape the collective anti-drug strategy for the next century.

9. Ms. LI San Gu (China) stressed the urgent need for effective measures to combat criminal activities through greater international cooperation, including judicial and technical cooperation and exchanges among States. Enhancing the crime prevention capability of developing countries was essential for promoting their stability and development and expanding cooperation in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. The United Nations and the international community should provide, as a matter of priority, financial resources and technical assistance to those countries in their efforts to combat criminal

activities and create a favourable environment for development. In that regard, she stressed that international cooperation in crime prevention should be conducted in accordance with respect for State sovereignty and on the basis of equality, and should be geared to the actual needs of developing countries.

10. The role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be further strengthened with sufficient funds for implementing crime-prevention programmes and following up the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Commission should focus its limited resources on the issues of greatest concern to Member States, such as organized crime, drug-related crime, juvenile delinquency and economic crime. An action-oriented policy should be followed and care should be taken to avoid overlapping.

11. In the past year the Chinese Government had improved its legislation in the field of criminal justice, enhanced its cooperation with various countries and taken an active part in United Nations programmes. China was ready to increase its cooperation with other countries to curb organized transnational crime, and would consider the elaboration of a convention on that question. It hoped that the United Nations and the international community would provide it with technical assistance to enhance its ability to combat criminal activities.

12. Ms. ZHMACHENKO (Ukraine), speaking also on behalf of the Republic of Moldova, said that their two delegations associated themselves with the general views expressed at the 8th meeting by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. She expressed support for the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security (A/C.3/51/L.3), which should facilitate cooperation in order to create a secure environment for sustainable growth, and of the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials (A/C.3/51/L.2). The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were deeply concerned about the growing links between crime and drug abuse and favoured strengthening the operational links between the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

13. The draft United Nations framework convention against organized crime submitted by Poland (A/C.3/51/7) deserved careful consideration and was consistent with the overall approach taken by the United Nations. The possibility of elaborating international legal instruments in that area should be considered on a priority basis by the relevant United Nations bodies, particularly the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

14. In view of the increase in drug-related crimes in the two countries, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were cooperating at the bilateral and multilateral level to combat illicit drug trafficking. As parties to the major international conventions on drug control, they had always supported the measures taken by the international community and had made a substantial effort to improve their national capacities to combat illicit drug trafficking through the adoption of domestic legislation. The two countries highly appreciated the work of UNDCP and supported its integrated approach to demand and supply reduction and the fight against illicit drug trafficking. Constructive relations had been established between the Programme and the national

departments engaged in fighting drug addiction. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine supported the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on international drug control.

15. Crime prevention was an integral part of Ukraine's national policy. Her country had recently drawn up a comprehensive programme of action to combat crime and relied on support from the international community, particularly through the relevant United Nations programmes. Ukraine sought to focus attention on both the punishment of offenders and rehabilitation during imprisonment. United Nations norms in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice were of great importance in that regard. In recent years, her Government had adopted a number of laws to ensure the implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules).

16. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that the proposal by Poland concerning a draft United Nations framework convention against organized crime (A/C.3/51/7) was worthy of everyone's support.

17. Trafficking in women and children was particularly repugnant. Recent international meetings had clearly underscored the global concern about trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children. The Philippines was addressing the problem of violence against women through various institutions, including a national commission on the role of Filipino women, which coordinated activities with the women's crisis centre and was assisted by a network of non-governmental organizations. The police, in collaboration with the national commission and some non-governmental organizations, sought to safeguard the well-being of women through a police "women's desk project", the first of its kind in the world. Several hundred women's desks had been established and in 1995 had dealt with almost 2,000 cases, ranging from slander to battering, rape and murder.

18. In partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the National Commission on Human Rights and concerned non-governmental organizations, the police protected the rights of all children in the country. The children and youth relations project provided basic skills to police officers to enable them to deal with children in especially difficult circumstances and ensure their commitment to respond to the needs of such children. To date, more than 4,000 children and youth relations sections had been established in police stations throughout the country. To prevent the smuggling of children, social workers had been deployed at Manila International Airport to screen unaccompanied minors leaving the country. Furthermore, such children must obtain travel certificates before they could be issued passports.

19. In accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Ninth United Nations Crime Congress, her country had taken measures relating to the links between terrorist crimes and organized crime, firearms regulations, and the implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Much greater attention should be given to assisting the victims of crime, particularly women and children. The police, immigration officers and other personnel should receive training to deal with traumatized victims. Within the United Nations system, research had been conducted on ways to treat

the victims of various types of traumatic situations, and consideration had been given to the development of manuals to assist crime victims. Such research should be used in order to draw up a training manual that would be applicable in various situations in order to help the victims of traumatic stress. Lastly, she expressed her delegation's support for the activities of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

20. Mr. REID (Australia) said that Australia had long advocated a balanced approach to the problem of drug abuse. Accordingly, its national drug strategy was aimed at both reducing demand and controlling supply. While the ultimate aim was to eliminate drug abuse, the strategy reflected the need for complementary measures to minimize the harm caused by drug users to themselves and others. One of the most effective initiatives had been the introduction of a needle-exchange scheme for injecting drug users, a simple and relatively low-cost measure which had ensured that levels of infection among intravenous drug users in Australia had remained relatively low. Another element of the strategy was education, both in schools and in the community, aimed at preventing young people from taking up illicit drug use. A major prevention programme was currently being developed using funds seized from drug traffickers. The problem of controlling the supply of drugs was addressed through a strong emphasis on law enforcement.

21. His delegation believed that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs provided Member States with a useful forum for exchanging information and learning from the experiences of other countries. Australia would continue to make an active contribution to its work. His delegation welcomed the formulation by the Commission and UNDCP of a demand-reduction strategy. The adoption of a declaration on demand reduction at the special session of the General Assembly on international drug control in 1998 would be a fitting culmination to the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse. The special session should not be regarded as yet another new beginning in the fight against drugs, but as an opportunity to consider how the existing international instruments could be more effectively implemented, since no provision could yield results until it was put into practice. The old divisions must be set aside and the international community must present a united front against the threat of drugs. It was high time consumer countries acknowledged publicly that the demand they were creating for narcotics was as much a part of the problem as the supply coming from the producer countries.

22. Australia hoped that the various bodies of the United Nations system whose work touched on drug control, together with relevant regional and non-governmental organizations, would play a prominent role in the special session.

23. His delegation was concerned at the increasing use of designer drugs, such as "ecstasy". In Australia, young people were being educated about the risks of designer drugs, and their availability was being restricted through legislation. If the production of designer drugs was to be contained, the movement of precursors and essential chemicals must be controlled.

24. His country's experience had shown that, in a shrinking world where economies were becoming more liberalized and legitimate commercial trade was

constantly expanding, effective action must be taken against money laundering. In accordance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force, Australia had put in place comprehensive legislation, financial regulations and law-enforcement mechanisms to combat that scourge.

25. His delegation believed that Australia's national drug strategy could provide a useful model for other countries since it addressed the social and economic factors underlying the problem of illicit drug use and production. Their's was a practical, realistic and humane approach which should be taken into account when multilateral responses to drug production, trafficking and consumption were formulated.

26. Mr. AMIRKHIZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation strongly endorsed the documents on crime prevention which had been adopted at recent world conferences, showing the global political will to cooperate in dealing with new developments in crime prevention. Transnational organized crime was a complicated and serious problem threatening all countries and all segments of society. The Islamic Republic of Iran committed itself to the fight against narcotic drugs as one of the obvious manifestations of organized crime.

27. Located between the supplier countries in the east and large markets in the west, his country was extremely vulnerable to the operations of drug-traffickers. A convention against transnational crime should be based upon existing instruments, particularly the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. There should be much closer cooperation between the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to combat organized criminal networks, and there should be a central body to collect and disseminate information on their activities. He called upon all States to cooperate by providing information on transnational criminal activity to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division.

28. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supported the preventive and regulatory measures recommended by the Ninth United Nations Crime Congress with regard to money laundering and proceeds of crime, and urged the adoption of strict sanctions such as confiscation of the proceeds of crime and asset forfeiture. The strengthening of the capacities of developing countries through international cooperation and technical assistance was imperative for a successful fight against transnational crime.

29. In recent years, the Islamic Republic of Iran had suffered the consequences of terrorism, which had led to hundreds of deaths. The security forces were faced with organized criminals and terrorists equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry. His Government supported the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements to forbid the use of national territory for terrorist activities. The use of the proceeds of crime to finance terrorism was another menace confronting the world community. While vehemently condemning terrorism in all its forms, his delegation emphasized that an exact definition of terrorism, differentiating it clearly from legitimate struggles for national liberation, would be indispensable in order to prevent arbitrary decision-making.

30. The issue of extradition also deserved attention. Extending bilateral and multilateral extradition treaties and facilitating extradition by reducing red tape would help to improve the situation. The problem of corruption would be best dealt with by a two-sided approach, placing equal emphasis on prevention and monitoring. Corruption affected the economic and social health of societies. Measures should be adopted to prevent multinational and foreign companies from using such methods as bribery to spread corruption. The extradition of corrupt individuals to their country of citizenship, prosecuting them in the country of refuge, and refraining from granting them political asylum would be useful measures to strengthen the rule of accountable governance. The money and property involved should be returned to the country which had sustained the financial damage.

31. Violence against women and abuse of children had reached alarming proportions in recent years. To a great extent, violence against women stemmed from ignorance, indifference of officials, absence of proper education, neglect of social, ethical, moral and religious values and lack of access to legal mechanisms. The guiding role of the mass media was undeniable. Iranian delegations at recent crime-prevention conferences had put forward proposals aimed at ensuring public decency and measures to reduce urban crime.

32. The vulnerability of women and children in armed conflicts was a grave problem, as had been seen recently in the mass sexual abuse of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the merciless bombing of innocent civilians in refugee camps in southern Lebanon.

33. His delegation welcomed the new responsibilities which had been given to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, and hoped that its laudable efforts would be crowned with even greater success in future.

34. Mr. YIP (Singapore) said that, with the involvement of powerful international criminal organizations, the problem of illicit drugs had taken on an even more threatening dimension. His delegation therefore welcomed the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council to convene a special session of the General Assembly on that issue. Where existing approaches were proving inadequate, new and stronger measures should be considered. His delegation was firmly convinced that, while international cooperation on drug control was important, there was no substitute for stringent national laws.

35. Singapore took an uncompromising stand against both drug abusers and suppliers. By vigorously enforcing the tough national legislation, it had ensured that the drug situation in Singapore remained manageable, despite geographical proximity to the "Golden Triangle". Drug traffickers were liable to the death penalty; while drug users were compulsorily committed to rehabilitation centres for periods of between six months and three years. Upon their release, they were required by law to undergo a mandatory two-year supervision scheme. Treatment and counselling were reserved for first-time offenders. Repeat offenders were dealt with in the penal system. Prevention was an important element of Singapore's anti-drug strategy. Drug-education programmes had been set up to teach the public, and young people in particular, about the dangers of drugs.

36. His Government recognized the need for international cooperation. Singapore participated in a number of anti-drug initiatives at both the regional and international levels, including the Heads of National Narcotics Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) and was a signatory to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. His country's law-enforcement agencies responded promptly to requests from their counterparts in other countries to intercept traffickers and investigate suspected consignments of drugs in transit through Singapore. Joint initiatives in the past had led to the dismantling of several international drug syndicates.

37. The potentially devastating consequences of the drug problem were more apparent to small countries like Singapore. If the international community was to win the battle against drugs, there could be no alternative to harsh measures. All countries must recognize that even the best anti-drug strategies would remain ineffective unless sufficient political will could be mustered to carry them through.

38. Mr. ALI KHAN (Pakistan) said that the international effort to curb the drug problem had, until recently, been somewhat one-sided, concentrating largely on controlling supply. It was high time that consumer States accepted their share of responsibility. Drug control initiatives could be effective only if a two-pronged approach was adopted, with the reduction of demand and control of supply being seen as mutually reinforcing elements. Demand reduction strategies should target schools and universities. Educators should be trained to enable them to integrate drug prevention into the curriculum. Recovering addicts should have the support of family counsellors to prevent them from returning to drug abuse. He looked forward to the adoption of a declaration on demand reduction and hoped that it would be a central theme at the special session of the General Assembly on international drug control.

39. The growth of the drug problem in Pakistan could be linked to developments in the region following the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Since then, drug abuse had affected every age group and social class. His Government's comprehensive anti-drug strategy included measures aimed at eradicating the cultivation of illicit drugs, eliminating trafficking and treating drug abusers. A separate ministry had been created to deal with the drug problem. Pakistan was a signatory to the various international conventions on narcotic drugs. Pakistan had proposed that drug control should be included in the framework of cooperation between the countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization; it had signed a memorandum of understanding between UNDCP and the countries of South-West Asia and had welcomed the UNDCP initiative to sponsor direct consultations between India and Pakistan on drug control.

40. The international community must invest in UNDCP. The determination expressed by all countries to fight the drug problem was not reflected in the level of funding allocated to UNDCP. UNDCP should serve as a central hub for the exchange of information on the drug problem, and the capacity of developing countries to collate such information should be strengthened.

41. There was a clear link between drug trafficking and money laundering to fund organized crime. The 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime contained clear guidelines on

combating that phenomenon. Finance ministers and drug-control officials should meet regularly in order to coordinate initiatives against money laundering.

42. Mr. PHAM BINH MINH (Viet Nam) said that the scourge of drug abuse and trafficking continued to be of great concern to the international community; it undermined societies, led to rising crime rates, and posed a growing threat to world stability. It called for global solutions through a comprehensive and balanced approach.

43. Since the drug problem was demand driven, success would depend to a considerable extent on a greater undertaking by the major consumer countries to reduce demand. International cooperation on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States constituted the most important factor in efforts to eradicate drug abuse and trafficking. His delegation hoped that the proposed special session of the General Assembly in 1998 would result in a renewed commitment. It would be an opportunity to reinforce international cooperation and to shape strategy for the twenty-first century.

44. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) played a vital role as a global centre of expertise, and should be provided with additional funds. Countries which were in a position to increase their contributions should endeavour to do so.

45. The Vietnamese authorities were responding to increasing drug abuse within its borders by formulating new laws and regulations; a separate law on drug control was currently being drafted. The Government had set up a national programme designed to reduce drug abuse through such measures as public information, to control such abuse at the national level, to treat and rehabilitate its victims, and to strengthen cooperation with the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). It had also strengthened its cooperation with other countries at the bilateral and regional levels and within the framework of the United Nations. Viet Nam was greatly appreciative of the financial assistance and expertise provided by UNDCP and, together with ASEAN countries, had formulated a three-year plan of action on drug abuse control. It was thus integrating its anti-drug activities into the framework of regional programmes.

46. Mr. GARCÍA MORITÁN (Argentina) said that international cooperation was of supreme importance for drug control. It was therefore highly regrettable that the International Narcotics Control Board, because of lack of resources, had decided to discontinue certain activities which were vital for decision-making in the area of narcotics control. Faced with the ever-increasing power of criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking, States and organizations must adapt their approaches in order to carry out a coordinated and intelligent struggle against drugs. Without regular cooperation from those Member States which had undertaken to support its work, the Board would be unable to carry out its tasks. He appealed to all Member States to increase their support for the Board; it was of vital importance for Argentina to continue receiving the Board's invaluable cooperation.

47. His Government would further increase its vigilance to ensure that chemicals were not diverted for illicit purposes. A recent decree had introduced strict measures controlling the production and internal and external trade in such chemicals. At a recent session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, a new hemispheric anti-drug strategy, including narcotics control, had been adopted.

48. Argentina looked forward to the special session of the General Assembly in 1998, which would assist in establishing a drug control strategy for the twenty-first century.

49. Mr. PASHAYEV (Azerbaijan) said that drug abuse, illegal drug trafficking and crime were increasing at alarming rates and had serious political, economic and social implications for countries, particularly the newly independent States, which had been confronted with problems resulting from aggression, large numbers of refugees and displaced persons, economies in transition and a geographical situation favourable to drug dealers. The problem of drug trafficking had become particularly acute in his country as a result of the armed aggression by Armenia and its continuing occupation of one fifth of Azerbaijan's territory. According to reports in the mass media, Nagorny Karabakh and the other occupied regions of Azerbaijan were being used by the Armenian aggressors for the illegal production and shipment of drugs to European countries. Nagorny Karabakh was reportedly a drug-trafficking centre in the Transcaucasian region.

50. His Government fully supported United Nations bodies active in combating drug abuse and preventing crime. Azerbaijan favoured further cooperation on the basis of the 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime and also supported the efforts to coordinate the activities of various United Nations, international and national bodies in combating transnational crime, including drug trafficking.

51. Lack of resources to combat international crime was a growing problem. There was a need to strengthen the financial support provided to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which were being called upon to carry out increasingly important tasks. Azerbaijan would like to be included in their technical and legal assistance programmes.

52. As an active partner of UNDCP, his country was prepared to consider the question of acceding to conventions on narcotic drugs. His country's position in combating drug abuse was based on resolutions and documents adopted by the United Nations and various international organizations. Azerbaijan had established an interdepartmental commission to combat drug addiction and drug trafficking, which would make it possible to expand its ties with UNDCP. It attached considerable importance to the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on international drug control in order to determine further steps to be taken in that field.

53. Ms. WAHBI (Sudan) said that her delegation supported the statement made at a previous meeting by the representative of Costa Rica. Rising levels of crime were of great concern to the international community, which had demonstrated its

desire to tackle the issue at the numerous conferences held with a view to strengthening cooperation. Her country had participated in all those conferences, and supported the resolutions they had adopted, particularly those related to increasing the ability of States to combat crime. In that regard, it was important to focus on developing countries which, owing to lack of resources, had become a theatre for organized transnational crime. She therefore called upon the international community to give technical and financial support to those countries and to encourage regional efforts, inter alia, by providing the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders with additional resources for the next biennium.

54. The Sudan was constantly developing its judicial apparatus, and to that end had held conferences and established a number of institutions. It had signed all the international agreements relating to money laundering and trafficking in persons.

55. She welcomed the draft United Nations framework convention against organized crime submitted by Poland (A/C.3/51/7). In that context, she felt it was important that the terms "organized" and "transnational" crime should not be used to describe controversial political ideas, but restricted to agreed social and legal dimensions. The draft required further study, and her delegation hoped that States would offer their comments. She stressed the importance of coordination between the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Third and Sixth Committees of the General Assembly in dealing with the draft Convention.

56. In the Sudan, drug abuse had not yet reached alarming proportions, but it was used as a transit country. Since drug abuse posed such a threat to society and the individual, the Sudan supported the international community in all its efforts. Poverty was a significant factor in regard to drugs, and there was therefore an important link between drug control and development. Moral persuasion was her country's first line of defence against drug abuse, but it also had a number of relevant laws, including the death penalty for drug trafficking, and was a party to all the relevant conventions. Ultimately, however, the best way to deal with drugs was through social planning, reinforcing social ties, and upholding moral, religious and spiritual values.

57. Mrs. HEPTULLA (India) said that the scourge of drug trafficking, with its accompanying evils of narco-terrorism and money laundering, endangered civilization; it transcended national boundaries and blurred the distinction between the developing and the developed world. The only answer was unreserved, global cooperation, the United Nations being the appropriate body for that purpose. Her delegation looked forward to the proposed special session of the General Assembly in 1998, in the hope that it would provide the necessary commitment and impart much needed momentum to the fight against drugs.

58. In the field of demand reduction, there was an urgent need to involve all segments of society, including non-governmental organizations. In developing countries, such organizations could assist UNDCP in enhancing its programmes. Since poverty and marginalization encouraged illicit crop cultivation, international cooperation was needed to promote socio-economic development in

the affected areas. Universal ratification of or accession to existing drug conventions would make them more effective. India, for its part, was a signatory to the three relevant United Nations conventions.

59. India's narcotics problem was largely transit-related, owing to its close proximity to major opiate-producing regions. The total quantity of heroin seized in India in 1995 had been nearly 50 per cent more than in 1994, and the upward trend was continuing. The flow of narcotics from South-East Asia was particularly significant, owing to the difficulty of detection and the alarming growth in drug dependency in the areas bordering the opiate-producing regions. India had enacted comprehensive legislation providing for a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years for drug trafficking, and preventive detention for trafficking suspects. Special courts were being set up to try drug cases, and facilities had been created for education and treatment of drug addicts. The various measures were giving good results.

60. The Government accorded very high priority to bilateral cooperation in combating drug trafficking; bilateral agreements had proved very effective. India also fully supported regional cooperation, and was collaborating with its neighbours through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. India's commitment to the war against narcotics was total. The close connection between narcotics, gun-running and terrorism was clearly established. Democracies and pluralist societies were particularly vulnerable to narco-terrorism, requiring a determined effort on the part of all countries.

61. India was one of the few countries which produced licit opium for medicinal and other purposes. Her Government supported the view that global production of opiate raw materials should be restricted to levels corresponding to actual needs, and had taken a number of measures to monitor the cultivation of the opium poppy and to prevent its diversion.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.